

February 4, 2000

Ms Wendy Dixon , EIS Project Manager (M/S-010)
 U. S. Department of Energy, Office of Civilian Radioactive
 Waste Management, Yucca Mountain Site Characterization Office
 P.O. Box 30307, Las Vegas, NV 89036-0307

RECEIVED

FEB 10 2000

Dear Ms Dixon,

I am a United States citizen living at 2744 Russell Boulevard just off Jefferson Avenue in St. Louis, Missouri. Everyday I drive over the Jefferson Avenue Overpass that is elevated above the main train switching yard for all incoming and outgoing trains passing through St. Louis.

1...

I have serious concerns about the feasibility of transporting high level radioactive waste by means of trains and/or trucks across the surface of the United States. I have researched the safety records and problems of the American railroad and trucking industries, and looked at the data generated by geologists and seismic engineers regarding their expectations of a New Madrid Earthquake on a major portion of the midwest. St. Louis was one of the original six mid western cities chosen to be studied by USGS in their QUSEPP studies in the 1970's. St. Louis was later removed as one of the six locations to be studied and Little Rock Arkansas was put in its place. Investigation revealed that political pressures from St. Louis were responsible for that action.

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There is an irony in the Department of Energy's (DOE) promotion of the transport of **high level** radioactive waste on trains and trucks to the western United States in the 1990's when they officially discouraged transport of the **low level** radioactive waste at DOE's Weldon Spring Sites Remedial Action Project in St. Charles County in the 1980's. When the citizens' organization pressed for removal of the Weldon Spring radioactive wastes DOE officials told the citizens **"it would be a greater risk to the St. Charles County communities and others all along the route to wherever it would be taken by train or truck transport."** They said it would be far safer to keep it where it was **already located.**

The citizens learned from their U. S. Senators that they could not legally force DOE to remove the wastes, however, the citizens were entitled to the Best Available Technology (BAT) to construct storage for the wastes which would protect their air and their groundwater from the contamination of the low level radioactive wastes. The citizens group accepted this rationale and set out to educate themselves about Best Available Technologies needed by Missouri geology. They accepted their perceived responsibility to do the safest thing and not send it through communities all along the route to more arid climate out west.

As a result the DOE committed to developing the BATs that were necessary to protect St. Charles County's air and groundwater from the low level radioactive wastes present at the Weldon Spring Sites, and eventually touted Weldon Spring as the **"Crown Jewel of all DOE's Remedial Action Projects,"** and DOE extensively demonstrated their expensive R&D projects to the public, the media, and many government officials.

/

3 Armed with the above experience I am very concerned with DOE's present determination to transport 80,000 tons of high level radioactive waste from the eastern United States to the Yucca Mountain facility on trains and trucks in special casks which will "protect everyone even if they fall from a height of 40 feet in a train derailment." Please read Record 95 of 200 from the <http://infoweb3.newsbank.com> which is a news account of a train derailment in downtown St. Louis which quotes "This time we're lucky again," said St. Louis Fire Chief Neil Svetanics, standing 100 feet beneath a MacArthur Bridge trestle where **four railroad cars derailed** about 11:30 a.m. Monday's incident (July, 1991) involving a Union Pacific train was the fourth derailment downtown in 15 months."

I have included the 21 pages of infoweb3.newsbank records for inclusion in your considerations. These are but a few of the records available to the public. I typed in the search box **train derailments**, and then **Union Pacific train derailments**, and **CSX train derailments** before I ran out of time at the St. Louis Library. Under each heading there were additional listings; so if one typed in other railroad's names to access Santa Fe, Norfolk Southern, Conrail, Burlington Northern, Southern Pacific, and many smaller railroad companies a person could easily get facts on possibly a *thousand* railroad derailment records.

4 Derailments occur for many reasons: freeze thaw cycles move rail beds; low temperatures snapped steel on Columbus, Ohio railroad track causing a 3 inch crack in a rail (Jan. 1994); high temperatures caused "sun kinks" which warped stretches of railroad track at Fort Worth, Texas (Aug. 1998) derailing 13 cars of a 112 car Union Pacific freight train, and caused two separate Union Pacific train derailments in Dallas Texas during the same heat wave; old deteriorating track on bridge trestles such as the MacArthur Bridge which crosses the Mississippi at St. Louis Missouri at a height of 100 feet (so much for the casks ability to withstand a 40 foot fall) also cause derailments. How will the DOE take precautions against these ongoing hazards? _____

5 The point I am trying to make is the DOE has not done the necessary homework to ensure everyone's safety. Perhaps DOE has more research time put in on Yucca Mountain, but a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and the train transport option looks ridiculous in light of the technical and financial difficulties that beset the railroad industry. They also have serious drug problems among their employees which is also a threat to the national trucking industry which literally crowds the interstate highways during any day or night hours. _____

6 In addition to drug problems which DOE cannot control, there is the sheer volume of freight being transported at speeds over the legal limit even during daylight hours. interstate highways are in better shape than century old railroad track routes; however they have the unique problem of their own. Each truck has its own driver who may or may not use drugs, be sleepy, or be so time driven by their companies that their judgment is impaired. There are both legal weight and illegal weight trucks on the interstate as different states monitor this problem in different ways, either vigilantly (as a source of state income) or hoodwinked at certain times of day, usually when it is dark, when a big truck simply turns off all its running lights as it passes the weight station where the inspector is busy inspecting other trucks who obediently pulled off onto the weight station truck lane. This is not an uncommon occurrence in the midwest. _____

7 Legal trucks weights are 80,000 pounds per single unit, and there are tandem units which compound the problems. Interstates are built to withstand that weight, and the fees the trucks must pay help the states maintain their highways. Not knowing how heavy the illegal trucks are makes it impossible to gauge speed and other risk factors which could make that truck more prone to an accident. How can DOE calculate the impact of a collision of 80,000 pound tractor trailer? Not to mention the additional risk of possible drug use. These are risks that every motorist takes every time they get on interstate highways. Just the size and the speed of the interstate trucking industry creates and unthinkable environment for DOE to even consider shipping the most hazardous waste in the world through the heartland of America. Will DOE test the high level waste casks in a collision with an 80,000 pound tractor trailer?

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...1 I think the current risks of railroad derailments and trucking industry problems are enough to nullify any merit of the DOE's plan to ship high level radioactive waste either by trains or trucks. If all of the legitimate reasons stated aren't enough to convince DOE, then you must factor in the New Madrid Earthquake as another major factor. Missouri geologists at the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geology and Land Survey in Rolla, Missouri stated that a major New Madrid Earthquake is overdue. Major players in the St. Louis Metro region are doing retro-seismic engineering activities for their businesses. The Federal Reserve Bank has been preparing for a long time as heavy damage would shut down national east/west banking monetary action. Ameren, UE (formerly Union Electric) is anchoring all of their electric generators to the concrete pads they sit on. All highways, interstates, and railroad tracks will be severed in areas of upheaval, and rendered impassable. Will DOE contact the U.S.G.S. and Missouri Department of Natural Resources in Rolla, Missouri about this?

I hope an open, honest, and complete investigation and appraisal of facts mentioned in this letter will be embarked upon by the Department of Energy. It is an incredible thought that DOE might ignore all the facts stated in this letter and still proceed with their plans to transport High Level Radioactive Waste across this region by truck and train. Please send me a copy of the Yucca Mountain DEIS to my address below.

Sincerely,

Meredith Hunter

Meredith Bollmeier Hunter
2744 Russell Boulevard
St. Louis, Missouri 63104

cc: DOE Secretary, William Richardson
Missouri Governor, Mel Carnahan
St. Louis Mayor, Clarence Harmon
St. Louis Post-Dispatch Editor, Christine A. Bertelson

EIS001371

Record 95 of 200

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July 2, 1991

Column: TAB

Riverfront Evacuated In Train Spill ... Old Tracks Called Serious Safety Threat

By Bill Bryan and Andre Jackson
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Edition: 5*

Page: 1A

Estimated Printed Pages: 5

Index Terms:

mplazorko phdargan employee **railroad** train accident phlarouche official damage evacuation
united states procedure restriction agency temperature factor expansion
phelshout
railroad wreck
history

Article Text:

Fire and police officials breathed a collective sigh of relief Monday after the safe removal of derailed tank cars carrying potentially lethal nitric acid and propane gas.

Monday's close call was a reminder that some old, deteriorating **railroad** tracks downtown remain a serious threat to public safety, they said.

"This time, we're lucky again," said St. Louis Fire Chief Neil Svetanics, standing 100 feet beneath a MacArthur Bridge trestle where four **railroad** cars derailed about 11:30 a.m.

"We've had more trouble with **derailments** in this area than in all of the tracks in the rest of the city combined," Svetanics said.

"Something's very wrong when rail cars keep falling off their tracks."

Monday's accident involving a Union Pacific train was the fourth derailment downtown in 15 months.

John Bromley, director of media relations for Omaha, Neb.-based Union Pacific, said Monday night that the **railroad** had not determined the cause of the derailment.

Damages to the **railroad** cars proved to be relatively minor, but the accident caused major inconveniences to motorists, pedestrians and river traffic alike as authorities evacuated the area near the accident.

Authorities worried that the tilting cars on the train might plunge the 100 feet to the street below, pulling three tanker cars each filled with 16,000 gallons of nitric acid with them.

Authorities also were worried that one of the derailed cars of the 77-car Union Pacific train - an empty tanker that had contained propane - could fall.

"That empty tanker is like a bomb," said Fire Battalion Chief Dave Weman. "It's more dangerous than if it was full."

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"When empty, it still contains 1 to 3 percent capacity, and if it fell it would explode like a bomb."

William Palmer, a spokesman for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, said Union Pacific officials notified his department about the derailment about 2 p.m., nearly three hours after the accident. Department officials bristled at what they believed was a tardy call.

Union Pacific's Bromley said no hazardous materials had spilled at the derailment site. Because of this, notifying the department represented more of a formality than an urgent need, he said.

"It is our desire to notify any appropriate state agency as promptly as possible," Palmer said. "We have a number of agencies that need to be notified. Typically in any train derailment there is always some agency that feels they should have been notified in front of some other agency and that is something we have to deal with in each case."

Two other derailed cars contained lightweight plastic pellets, which posed no threat.

The Union Pacific train was eastbound on the MacArthur Bridge when a **railroad** worker noticed the derailment and had the engineer stop the train about 11:30 a.m.

Police feared that the tanker cars might erupt, igniting a fire to the bridge and to the warehouses below, and sending toxic fumes toward the Gateway Arch grounds. Nitric acid forms a yellowish cloud that may blister and scald the lungs and may cause fatal injuries, Palmer said.

As a result, authorities:

Closed down the Poplar Street Bridge.

Diverted traffic coming into the downtown area along the major interstates.

Evacuated the Arch grounds, a stretch of Leonor K. Sullivan Boulevard and several warehouses off of Chouteau between Broadway and Sullivan.

In addition, the U.S. Coast Guard closed the Mississippi River to traffic from noon to 2:20 p.m.

The evacuation led to a gridlock downtown. The temperature hit 100 degrees, making Monday the hottest day of the year.

The gridlock and empty Poplar Street Bridge made police officers in a helicopter above think of the 1950s science fiction movie "The Day the Earth Stood Still," said Deputy Chief Ray Lauer, who was in charge of police operations.

The Poplar Street Bridge and surrounding interstates were reopened shortly after 2 p.m., when the derailed cars were uncoupled from the train, allowing the tankers with the nitric acid to be pulled away.

Svetanics cited a recent derailment near Monday's mishap, near Chouteau and Leonor K. Sullivan. Authorities have complained about several **derailments** just to the west.

"We've had many **derailments** above Seventh Street, just south of Busch Stadium," Svetanics said.

Other recent **derailments** include:

February: An Alton & Southern train derailed on the MacArthur Bridge near the site of Monday's accident. Three empty freight cars plunged off the bridge to the ground about 70 feet below. Another car dangled from the bridge after the derailment.

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June 1990: Several cars of a freight train derailed on a trestle over Seventh Street just south of Busch Stadium. The accident closed the street and rerouted traffic from a Cardinals baseball game.

April 1990: Nine cars of a Union Pacific freight train derailed on tracks underneath the 14th Street viaduct near Highway 40 (Interstate 64).

No injuries were reported in any of the recent **derailments**.

Officials of the Terminal **Railroad** Association of St. Louis, which maintains the track south of downtown, said Monday afternoon that the cause of the accident had yet to be determined.

Bill Matthews, general superintendant for the Terminal **Railroad** Association of St. Louis, said he did not think the tracks were particularly dangerous.

"It's not unsafe," said Matthews, as he directed **railroad** workers on the trestle by telephone. "We've done a lot of work on the bridge."

Bill Davidson, president, said that the company's tracks were adequately maintained. "It's my understanding that it was not a track-related derailment," he said of Monday's mishap.

Davidson said that he had not heard any complaints about **derailments** from city agencies.

Mark Davis, a spokesman for Union Pacific, said that heat and track-maintenance procedures could have been factors in the derailment.

High temperatures often cause steel **railroad** track rails to expand, necessitating speed restrictions.

"We'll really be asking the Terminal **Railroad** Association if there's any precedent or pattern for maintenance" during hot weather, Davis said. "In this heat, you could disturb the rail in some way, shape or form" while working on tracks, he said.

The freight train started in Little Rock, Ark., and was traveling to the Alton & Southern **Railroad** yard in East St. Louis, Davis said.

The Federal **Railroad** Administration, a regulatory agency, is investigating Monday's derailment, said Claire Austin, a spokesman in Washington, D.C.

The **railroad** administration investigates **railroad** accidents if a fatality occurs, hazardous materials are released or more than \$50,000 damage occurs to a locomotive or **railroad** car.

(Following text ran in the 3* Edition only)

The agency requires railroads to inspect tracks at various intervals ranging from twice weekly to every 20 days, depending on the maximum speed allowed, said Austin. The agency also conducts its own random inspections, often after accidents occur or after receiving complaints, she said.

Austin said that during 1989, the latest year for which complete statistics were available, 72 railcars carrying hazardous materials passed through Missouri. In that year, 11 of the cars suffered some type of damage within the state and one released a hazardous material.

Caption:

GRAPHIC/ MAP by Tony Lazorko/Post-Dispatch ... Train Derailment ... map of site of derailment and area of evacuation.

GRAPHIC/ CHART/TABLE ... Recent **Derailments** Downtown ... chart list **derailments** which have taken place from April 1990 - February 1991.

Photo (COLOR) by Karen Elshout/Post-Dispatch ... An eerily vacant Arch grounds and Poplar Street Bridge about 1:30 p.m. Monday. The area was evacuated after a train derailment.

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August 3, 1998

TRAIN TRACKS BUCKLE, FIRES RAGE AS HEAT WAVE CONTINUES IN TEXAS

From News Services

Section: NEWS

Edition: FIVE STAR LIFT

Page: A6

Estimated Printed Pages: 2

Index Terms:

WEATHER

DISASTER

DROUGHT

Article Text:

DALLAS - Temperatures up to 106 degrees were blamed for warping stretches of **railroad** track, causing two separate Union Pacific train **derailments**.

The heat also hampered efforts to fight grass and brush fires that charred hundreds of acres in north Texas, destroyed a home and forced the evacuation of about 100 people from rural Parker County west of Fort Worth.

Sunday's temperature in Dallas passed 100 degrees at noon, making it the 28th consecutive triple-digit day. The city's high of 106 Saturday was a record for the date. On the other hand, Dallas' overnight low of 77 was the first time the city has cooled below 80 since July 19.

Ninety-nine deaths statewide have been attributed to heat-related causes, pushing the nationwide total to 155, including 29 in Louisiana and 19 in Oklahoma.

A high of 108 smothered Shreveport, La., on Sunday, and Oklahoma City had its 16th straight day of 100-plus readings with a high of 107.

Heat-warped **railroad** tracks derailed 13 cars of a 112-car freight train about 8 miles north of Fort Worth on Saturday, Union Pacific spokesman Mark Davis said Sunday. Nine of the cars carried aluminum ingots and four were empty. There were no injuries.

Davis blamed it on a "sun kink," when a sudden change in temperature or extreme heat expands the rail and moves it out of alignment.

Hill County sheriff's Deputy Joe Milligan said the same could be said for another Union Pacific accident Saturday that involved a Houston-bound 126-car train carrying coal from Wyoming. It ran off the tracks near Hillsboro, about 60 miles south of Dallas. Twelve cars derailed. There were no injuries.

"The tracks are expanding all over the state," Milligan said. "Once they expand, they shift a little bit and come out of their beds under these heavy coal trains."

Davis said Union Pacific has been monitoring its tracks daily because of the heat and has reduced track speed limits by 10 mph.

"Unfortunately, sometimes these sun kinks occur despite our best efforts," he said.

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The impact forced one of the train's three locomotives off the tracks and ruptured one of the train's fuel tanks. Between 1,000 and 2,000 gallons of diesel fuel spilled, Trandahl said. Officials with the company and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources supervised the cleanup.

Trandahl said total damages could reach almost \$150,000 for Union Pacific, including \$100,000 worth of damage to the single track. A track parallel to the **derailment's** track was slightly damaged. Service was restored within a few hours, Trandahl said.

After the train was removed, the workers had to use a backhoe to remove the damaged track, rails and ties. The base of the **railroad** track then had to be smoothed by graders.

Then workers laid new rail and ties. Once those were in place, 39-foot-long track panels were laid on the rails and welded into place, Trandahl said. Rock and other material in the base of the track then was compacted to improve stability for the train.

Caption:

Color Map By The Post-Dispatch - Train derailment

Map of the St. Louis area showing the general location.

Detail map showing the site of the derailment and the surrounding area.

MAP

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Record Number: 9803140650

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January 23, 1994

(PHOTO ONLY) COLD SNAPS STEEL

EIS001371

Section: NEWS

Edition: THREE STAR

Page: 3A

Estimated Printed Pages: 1

Index Terms:

EXPANSION

WEATHER

FREEZING

FROZEN

CONTRACTION

Article Text:

Caption:

Photo by AP - **CSX railroad** worker Jim Sears pours diesel fuel on a broken **railroad** section in Columbus, Ohio, Thursday, to help the steel expand and allow workers to repair a three-inch crack in the rail caused by the deep freeze.

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Record Number: 9401230002

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August 11, 1991

EIS001371

Derailments Spur Talk Of Tough Rules

By Peter Larsen
1991, Los Angeles Daily News

Edition: 3*

Page: 7C

Estimated Printed Pages: 3

Index Terms:

derailment rule spill accident train **railroad** chemical nation regulation law industry rule prevention
representative accident evacuation closing destruction official

Article Text:

LOS ANGELES - A pair of devastating toxic spills from derailed trains in California has spurred lawmakers to consider tough new regulations for shipping chemicals and other hazardous material along the nation's 200,000-mile network of rail lines.

To environmental advocacy groups that have long sought stricter rail-safety laws, the **derailments** on July 28 near Ventura and July 14 near Dunsmuir in northern California were an inevitable consequence of what they say are weak laws and oversight.

But state and federal lawmakers said last week that a sweeping overhaul of the rules for rail shipping may be necessary to prevent future accidents that could cause a catastrophic loss of human life.

"This is a potential time bomb," said Rep. Robert J. Lagomarsino, R-Ventura, whose district includes the Ventura County coastal community of Seacliff, where a train carrying toxic chemicals derailed two weeks ago.

Seaside homes in Seacliff, about 75 miles north of Los Angeles, were evacuated and Highway 101 was closed for five days after a northbound Southern Pacific train derailed on July 28.

The train was carrying 53 barrels of a rocket fuel component known as aqueous hydrazine, eight of which were destroyed in the wreck, and an industrial solvent called naphthalene.


Two weeks earlier, a Southern Pacific train hauling the pesticide metam sodium derailed into the headwaters of the Sacramento River near Dunsmuir. The pesticide killed all plant life and fish along a 45-mile stretch of the stream.

Rep. Barbara Boxer, D-San Francisco, convened a congressional hearing last week to consider whether the federal government has been lax in its oversight of rail shippers who handle hazardous material.

"People in California are justifiably frightened and angered by recent events," Boxer said. "And people in most of the United States could easily have this happen in their towns, in their neighborhoods.

"The most thoughtful, demanding set of regulations in the world would be worthless without teeth," Boxer said. "The federal government needs to pursue a relentless program of enforcement and follow-up of shippers of hazardous materials."

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Because rail transportation involves interstate commerce, regulations and oversight are the responsibility of the federal government, officials said.

Rail carriers who transport hazardous material must adhere to a basic set of rules, according to Molly Hart, a spokeswoman for the Federal **Railroad** Administration in Washington.

The substance must be placed in special tank cars that bear placards designating the basic type of hazardous material stored inside, Hart said, and those tanks cars must be placed in the center of the train - at least six cars behind the last locomotive and six cars before the end of the train.

Train crew members must have lists detailing all hazardous material on board, information on how to handle the hazardous material and a 24-hour telephone number for the shipping or chemical company that sent the material, Hart said.

But there is no requirement that local authorities be notified in advance that hazardous material will pass through their jurisdictions, officials said.

And the shipping rules apply only to material that is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as hazardous - a category that does not include many substances, including the pesticide that spilled into the Sacramento River.

Jim Reiter, a spokesman for the American Association of Railroads, an industry organization, said that rail carriers believe current laws are adequate.

He said federal statistics show that the vast majority of toxic material shipped by rail each year arrives at its destination safely. Last year, Reiter said, trains carried more than 1.6 million cars carrying hazardous material.

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Record Number: 4910043840

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July 17, 1991

River Poisoned By Derailment

EIS001371

Compiled From News Services

Edition: 5*

Page: 9A

Estimated Printed Pages: 2

Index Terms:

phap california accident contamination leak kill examination poison derailment fish community
official bird animal leader threat industry warning official

Article Text:

DUNSMUIR, Calif. - Thousands of gallons of a pesticide from a derailed tank car drifted down the Sacramento River on Tuesday, killing thousands of fish and sickening scores of people.

The spill, in northern California near Mount Shasta, was within two miles of Lake Shasta by late Tuesday.

The mountain lake is a source of water for downstream communities, but officials said the pesticide was expected to become safely diluted by the lake.

A **railroad** tank car carrying 19,500 gallons of the chemical crashed into the river late Sunday when a locomotive and seven cars of a Southern Pacific train derailed.

Sharon Brown, a spokeswoman for the California Department of Emergency Services, said the pesticide was killing brown and rainbow trout, bass and perch.

There were reported sightings of dead otters, birds and other animals, but they could not be confirmed.

California state Resources Secretary Douglas Wheeler, who visited the site of the spill Tuesday, called it "an ecological disaster."

Boaters and fishermen were advised to avoid the Sacramento River arm of the reservoir, and business leaders said the spill threatened the area's summer tourist and sport fishing industries.

"We are world famous for our fishing on the arms of the rivers that feed Shasta," said Michael Arnold of the Chamber of Commerce for Shasta County. "Nothing this devastating has ever occurred."

The pesticide contains metam sodium, which is toxic. It is normally applied to soil several weeks before planting. The chemical kills a variety of agricultural pests, as well as weeds. Because the U.S. Department of Transportation does not classify the chemical as "hazardous," no warnings were posted on the rail car.

Campgrounds in the mountainous area, about 50 miles south of the Oregon border, and a 60-mile stretch of the river were closed to the public.

County health officials said about 100 people were treated for skin and eye irritation or respiratory problems.

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March 14, 1998

TRAIN DERAILMENT NEAR KIRKWOOD APPARENTLY IS DUE TO ROCKSLIDE

Lance Williams
Of The Post-Dispatch

Section: NEWS
Edition: FIVE STAR LIFT
Page: 3
Estimated Printed Pages: 2

Index Terms:

ACCIDENT
RAILROAD
FREIGHT TRAIN DERAILMENT
INJURY EMPLOYEE
WORKER ENGINEER
CAUSE INVESTIGATION
LANDSLIDE
ROCK BOULDER
ST. LOUIS COUNTY MUSEUM OF TRANSPORTATION
QUINETTE BARRETT STATION ROAD
BELMONT
OAKWOOD LONGSTONE BIG BEND BOULEVARD

Article Text:

* No one was seriously injury in the accident on a Union Pacific track. Amtrak service was disrupted for a while.

Officials believe an early morning freight train derailment near Kirkwood was caused by a rock-slide that blocked the tracks.

Work crews worked Friday to clear the freight train from the accident site and then begin the job of rebuilding the half-mile of heavily damaged track. They aren't expected to finish the job before early this afternoon.

Amtrak service was disrupted Friday morning as well. Morning trips between Kansas City and St. Louis were canceled; service was restored for the mid-afternoon routes.

Amtrak spokesman Marc Magliari said about 100 passengers were affected. Those who couldn't wait for the afternoon train were transported by chartered buses, which added several hours to their trip, he said.

The derailment occurred on a Union Pacific track that runs parallel to Big Bend Road in Valley Park. Six boulders - some more than 25 feet in length - tumbled onto the track, said Union Pacific spokesman Ed Trandahl, who is based in Omaha, Neb. He said investigators believed the boulders were loosened by recent freezing and thawing.

The Los Angeles-bound train, which had just left Dupu, Ill., wasn't able to stop in time and hit the boulders. The train was carrying about 30 cars loaded with heavy mechanical equipment. The train's two engineers suffered minor bumps and were treated and released from a local hospital.

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March 22, 1997

EIS001371

**'IT'S A MATTER OF INCHES'
IN MISSOURI, 19 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AT RAILROAD CROSSINGS
LAST YEAR. IN ILLINOIS, 34 WERE KILLED.**

Mei-Ling Hopgood
of the Post-Dispatch Staff

Section: NEWS
Edition: FIVE STAR LIFT
Page: 14
Estimated Printed Pages: 7

Index Terms:

ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
ST. CHARLES COUNTY
ST. LOUIS COUNTY
MADISON COUNTY
ST. CLAIR COUNTY
JEFFERSON COUNTY MISSOURI RIVER
MERAMEC RIVER
MISSISSIPPI RIVER
KANSAS CITY ST. LOUIS
70
555
157 270
111
159
64
163
255
15 367
67
370
94
40
70 141
44
30
21
55
TRAIN CROSSING
COLLISION
DEATH
INJURY STATISTICS
ANALYSIS TRACKS
DRIVE

Article Text:

On Nov. 2, Russell Kaufman drove west from his home in St. Charles to visit one of his children in St. Peters. The 77-year-old security guard headed down Elm Point Road and toward the train tracks, as he did several times a week.

See next page

EIS001371

A train was coming from behind him on the tracks that run parallel to the road. at the tracks, warning lights flashed and bells rang

Drivers behind Kaufman watched in horror as he made the sharp turn over train tracks - right in front of the train. The train hit his car and threw it 90 feet. Kaufman died instantly.

Kaufman was the second person to die last year at the Elm Point **railroad** crossing - the deadliest crossing in the St. Louis region.

In Missouri, 19 people died at **railroad** crossings last year. In Illinois, 34 died. Dozens more were injured.

Authorities said many people get into wrecks because they don't pay attention. Or worse, they try to beat trains to the crossings despite blaring horns, flashing lights or even gates barricading the crossings.

Last year in Missouri, more than one of every three railroad-crossing accidents happened at crossings with warning signals, including lights or gates. In Illinois, nearly two of three crossing accidents happened at crossings with warning signals.

The other accidents happened at crossings marked only with signs.

A Post-Dispatch analysis of Federal **Railroad** Administration data shows the Elm Point crossing is the region's deadliest.

In total number of accidents, however, it ranks second to a crossing near Brooklyn.

Dangerous At Night

Just outside the village limits of Brooklyn, a maze of **railroad** tracks winds across Canal Street where it turns into Big Bend Road. Few signs mark the tracks, and no street lamps light the desolate stretch of road near the small village of Brooklyn. At night, neighbors say, the area around the tracks is black as pitch.

Near East St. Louis

The most active track - and the most dangerous - is marked with signals and gates. That's the extent of the precautions Illinois officials said they plan to put in place.

Between January 1991 and last September, eight drivers had accidents at the crossing, which is by the **railroad** yard. Most of the accidents have occurred at night. Three people have been injured there.

Brooklyn police were unfamiliar with most of the recent crashes. But federal records show most happened because the drivers did not stop for the oncoming trains.

According to the **railroad** administration, Illinois ranks second worst nationally with 1,745 accidents from January 1991 to last September. Only Texas, with 2,904, had more rail-crossing accidents.

Many of the Illinois accidents happened in the Chicago area.

Missouri ranked 16th - with 711 accidents during that same period.

The drivers are nearly always at fault in these accidents. In Missouri and Illinois, only about 5 percent of accidents happened because of faulty **railroad** equipment.

Cross With Caution Back north of St. Charles, Elm Point Road snakes west, parallel to the Norfolk

15

Southern **railroad** tracks, past new subdivisions, trailer parks and a few businesses.

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The two-lane street turns sharply, almost 90 degrees, up an incline and over the tracks before it turns into Zumbahl Road. Now, five pairs of flashing red lights warn of coming trains. There is no gate.

Between January 1991 and last September, six vehicles were in accidents at Elm Point crossing. One person was killed and one person was injured at that crossing. Russell Kaufman's accident in November upped the number of crashes there to seven and the fatalities to two.

Officials have been working to improve the Elm Point crossing for the last two decades. The first warning lights at that crossing went up in 1982. Two other crossings along Elm Point closed in the last five years.

Norfolk Southern installed more warning lights at the Elm Point crossing last month. Ultimately, the railroads are responsible for the crossings. the government helps pay for and make upgrades or changes.

Bob Auman a spokesman for Norfolk Southern, said the **railroad** is aware of the problems at Elm Point. But he said warning bells and lights can't take the place of common sense.

"Engineering solutions are no substitute for cautious driving," Auman said.

State officials are waiting for federal money to install a crossing gate and a high-tech warning system at Elm Point.

State and county officials also may redesign the crossing. Rick Mooney, manager of **railroad** safety for Missouri's Division of Motor Carrier and **Railroad** Safety, said the state planned to make the road approach the tracks at a slant so drivers will have a better view of the tracks.

Money to install the gates should come this spring, Mooney said. The work could be completed by the summer of 1998.

That's not soon enough for Kim Kammerlen, Russell Kaufman's daughter. Kaemmerlen believes her father would still be alive if county and state officials had pushed sooner for gates at the crossing.

"The crossing is terrible," said Kammerlen. "It's a shame people have lost their loved ones in the interim. I think it could have been avoided."

St. Charles County officials are considering relocating the crossing altogether if Elm Point is extended to Truman Boulevard. That won't happen for several years, they said.

Ed Reifsteck Sr. was waiting for the train when Kaufman was hit. Reifsteck has seen several accidents there in the 24 years he has owned a business on Elm Point. The drivers, he said, often do not see the train coming up behind them. And the best view down the tracks doesn't come until you are almost on the hill where the track sit.

"Almost every car has been going the same way as the train when they get hit," Reifsteck said. "The train is in a blind spot. If teh approach were longer, people could see [the train]."

"A gate is all they need," Reifsteck added. His son's cart also was hit by a train there on a winter day about 10 years ago. His son's car slid on the icy road into the crossing and the train swiped the bumper. His son was uninjured.

Who's Responsible?

Missouri and Illinois have a limited amount of federal money to devote to make **railroad** crossings safer. That's what holds up many improvements at crossings.

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Missouri has a budget of about \$5 million a year to redesign crossings, install warning devices and other safety equipment. Illinois has a budget of about \$24 million. It costs at least \$150,000 to install warning lights and gates.

Both states are working to get police to ticket drivers who run through the gates when a train is approaching. In Missouri, the maximum penalty for running a warning signal at a **railroad** crossing is a \$300 fine and 15 days jail.

Last year, Illinois raised its maximum fine for running warning signals at **railroad** crossings to \$500 from \$75. Enforcement throughout the state is sporadic, largely because of limited resources.

State officials said they still need to do more to warn drivers at most of the problem crossings. "We want to eliminate all crossing collisions that involve the loss of life and injury," Mooney said.

Ultimately, the best way for drivers to prevent accidents is to be extra careful when crossing tracks., especially trickier ones like Elm Point Road. Operation Lifesaver, a **railroad** safety group, has begun a public service announcement campaign to remind the public how dangerous tracks can be.

Mooney is optimistic that this year will be better than the last. So far, only one person has died in a railroad-crossing accident. It happened this month near Kansas City at a crossing with no signals.

In the first three months of 1995, eight people had died in train accidents in Missouri. In the first three months of last year, four died.

"I hope we only have one the whole year," Mooney said. "We have a lot of programs in place to help. But as far as someone getting killed or injured, it's a matter of inches... Motorists should be prepared to stop at the tracks. If they look and listen, they're going to live."

Accidents At Elm Point Rail Crossing

(1991 - 1996)

Oct. 11, 1993, 10:10 p.m.

A train going 45 mph hits a car that crosses despite warning lights flashing. No one is injured.

Oct. 31, 1993, 2:05 p.m.

Dorothy Munn's 1994 Eagle Vision hits a **railroad** crossing light and her car comes to rest on the railroad tracks. Timothy Lawson stops his pickup, partially on the tracks, gets out and tries to help her. A Norfolk Southern train hits both cars. No one is injured.

May 16, 1995, 2:05 p.m.

Michael Bade of Defiance fails to heed warning signals as he drives his truck across the tracks. The train hits the truck causing it to spin 180 degrees on the side of the roadway. No one is hurt.

Aug. 14, 1995 6 p.m.

David Costello, who lives about 600 yards from the tracks, drives his GMC van onto the crossing. A train hits his car at 60 mph. Costello said a radio and bright sunlight prevented him from seeing the flashing lights or hearing the horns blaring. He must get 25 stitches in the arm and 12 stitches in the head and suffers five broken ribs.

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July 13, 1996 6:10 p.m.

John Semar doesn't hear a train or the warning bells as he comes to the crossing. He drives his Cadillac across the tracks and is struck in the rear by the train. Afterward, he complains of his legs aching.

Aug. 20, 1996, 6:25 p.m.

John J. Jacobsen, 42, of St. Peters, is killed as he crosses the tracks ahead of a Norfolk southern train. Witnesses said lights were flashing and horns were blaring. Jacobsen was westbound, the same direction as the train.

Nov. 2, 1996, 7:35 p.m.

Russell Kaufman, 77, of St. Charles, dies when he crosses the tracks heading westbound. Lights were flashing and horns were blaring as he turned across the tracks in front of the train

Caption:

- (1) Photo by Odell Mitchell Jr./Post-Dispatch - This rail crossing in Brooklyn, Ill., is the most dangerous in the bistate area. Eight accidents have occurred here.
- (2) Photo by Odell Mitchell/Post-Dispatch - The Elm Point Road crossing has no gates. Two people have died in accidents here.
- (3) Map - The Most Dangerous Crossings In The Region
January 1991-September 1996, except Elm Point Road, which is thorough November 1996
1. Brooklyn, Ill. - Big Bend Rd. and Canal St. 8 accidents, 3 injuries. No plans for changes; has gates and lights.
 2. St. Charles Co. - Elm Point Rd. 7 accidents 2 deaths, 1 injury. Has lights, but no gates.
 3. Springfield, Ill. - 15th St. 7 accidents, 1 death, 4 injuries. Closed in 1995, due to accidents.
 4. St. Louis - Baron St. 6 accidents, 2 injuries. Private crossing, no plans for changes.
 5. Clinton Co., Ill.
Illinois route 161, 5 accidents, 1 death, 4 injuries.
Gates and lights planned.
 6. Webster Groves - Rock Hill Rd. 5 accidents, 1 injury. Plan to move road north of crossing in 1998.
 7. Dunklin Co., Mo. - Independence Rd. 4 accidents, 1 death 1 injury. No plans for changes; **railroad** may abandon tracks.
 8. Hannibal, MO. - Broadway St. 4 accidents, 1 death.
New signals planned for 1998.
 9. St. Charles Co. - Hoff Rd. 4 accidents, 5 injuries,
Estimated cost of \$600,000 to redesign crossing and add gates;
needs new traffic lights
 10. New Baden, Ill. - Illinois Route 160, 4 accidents, 2 injuries.
Gates and lights planned.
 11. Godfrey, Ill. - Highway 111 and 67 4 accidents, 1 injury.
Changes pending.
 12. East St. Louis - State St. 4 accidents, 1 injury.
Adding signal lights.
 13. St. Louis - Germania Ave. 4 accidents, no injuries. Tracks not used much; no plans to change
- PHOTO, MAP

Memo: COVER STORY

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January 23, 1990

OK For Warning Lights At Fatal Crash Scene Took 30 Months

By Robert Kelly
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

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Index Terms:

(002) installation warning delay postponement objection death fatality accident infant baby official need prevention

Article Text:

An application to install flashing signal lights at a **railroad** crossing in northeastern Madison County took more than 30 months to approve even though there were no objections, a state official said Monday.

The application was delayed because of objections to the installation of lights at a second crossing nearby.

Work has yet to begin on installation of lights at either crossing.

A fatal train-car collision occurred Saturday at the crossing. There were no objections to the installation of lights at that location, but there were objections to installation of lights at a nearby crossing. Those objections delayed both projects.

Both applications had been consolidated for hearings before the Illinois Commerce Commission, said Bernie Morris, the commission's chief **railroad** engineer.

Morris said he regretted Saturday's accident at the unlighted crossing. "In a kind of back-door way, it says that at least we were looking at the right crossings" for signal lights, he said.

The crash Saturday occurred at the Rezy Road crossing, about two miles northeast of Livingston.

Richard Lynn Pratt, 28, of Staunton, was killed when the pickup he was driving was struck by a Union Pacific freight train. His son, Richard Jr., 1, was in a child-restraint seat in the truck and survived with minor injuries.

Morris said Olive Township officials and officials of the **railroad** had agreed in an application submitted to the Commerce Commission on Feb. 27, 1987, that signal lights were needed at the Rezy Road crossing.

But the **railroad** disagreed with township officials on whether lights were needed at the Boozie Hill Road crossing nearby, Morris said. The **railroad** wanted that crossing closed.

Combined hearings were held on both applications. The objections over the crossing on Boozie Hill Road led to a delay in approval of signal lights and other improvements at both crossings until last Aug. 23, Morris said.

The Commerce Commission decided that signal lights were needed at both crossings. Both now are marked only with white reflective signs that say, "**Railroad** Crossing."

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Applications often are approved by the commission within six to nine months if there are no objections, Morris said.

Morris said flashing signal lights might have prevented Saturday's wreck. Even so, about 80 percent of all train-car collisions in Illinois happen when motorists ignore signal lights or drive around crossing gates, he said.

Alan Libbra, an Olive Township trustee, said the commission had had all the information it had requested from the township on the crossings since July 1987. "It just sat there for two full years," Libbra said. "For the people involved, it was a frustrating experience."

Libbra said the **railroad** had wanted the Boozie Hill Road crossing closed to save money on maintenance, but township officials opposed that because it would have cut off several homes from easy access to nearby towns.

Libbra had said Sunday that "it seems to take a fatality before anything is done" to improve **railroad** crossings.

Saturday's fatal accident was the second at the Rezy Road crossing in less than four years. A 16-year-old girl was killed in a collision at the crossing in March 1986.

Mark Davis, a spokesman for Union Pacific, said the train involved in Saturday's collision was going 50 mph in a 60-mph zone when it hit the truck. No charges were filed. Members of the train crew were not identified by **railroad** officials.

Davis said the **railroad** had had few other problems at the Rezy Road crossing.

The state will pay 95 percent of the \$54,221 cost of installing signal lights at each crossing near Livingston, with the **railroad** paying the rest and all maintenance charges, Morris said.

He said the township would pay \$6,000 for a new surface at the Rezy Road crossing and almost half of that cost at the Boozie Hill Road crossing, with the **railroad** paying the rest.

And the township has agreed to pay \$1,800 to widen and flatten road approaches to each crossing, Morris said.

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Record 141 of 200

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September 8, 1989

Column: COMMENTARY

Rail MX: Accident Waiting To Happen

By Alan Wheat

Edition: 3S

Page: 3C

Estimated Printed Pages: 3

*see
next page
for light**Index Terms:*

union russia missile silo deployment train **railroad** united states union russia target missile sketch
profile
column

Article Text:

It's a bad idea that won't go away. It is true that compared to its predecessor - the Minuteman - the MX missile is a far more accurate and explosive weapon. But the usefulness of the MX as a nuclear deterrent depends on its ability to survive a Soviet attack. It cannot.

Remember, the MX was originally developed to replace the aging Minuteman missiles because the Minuteman sat vulnerable to Soviet attack in underground silos. Yet 16 years, 37 basing plans and billions of dollars later, the MX sits in those same Minuteman si los, equally vulnerable. In effect, we put better eggs in an unguarded henhouse.

Now we have the proposed MX "rail garrison" basing mode, one of 37 basing schemes that have been proposed over the 15-year history of the MX. The previous 36 ideas - from dirigibles to subterranean missile "subways" to underground "quicksand" shafts - have all been rejected. Plan No. 37 should join them on the scrapheap.

The plan goes something like this: MX-bearing trains, disguised to look like commercial trains, would be deployed in shelters in as many as 10 Strategic Air Command bases, including Whiteman Air Force Base near Kansas City. These trains, each with 20 nuclear warheads, would leave their bases during periods of high U.S.-Soviet tension and disperse across the nation's public railroads.

The purpose? To guarantee land-based nuclear deterrents that would not be sitting targets for Soviet missiles.

The problem? The system's mobility would only mask its failure to ensure MX survivability.

Consider the size of an MX railcar. An average railcar's maximum weight is 154,00 pounds, its average length 51 feet. By contrast, a loaded MX railcar would weigh more than 500,000 pounds; its length would be at least 87 feet.

Due to their size and weight, the MX cars could only travel about 30 mph on most of the nation's railroads. Due to this slow speed and the inadequate blast protection of MX cars, the entire MX rail garrison force could be destroyed by relatively few well-placed Soviet warheads simply targeted at strips of track.

MX rail-garrison advocates contend that this problem could be overcome by dispersing the cars at any hint of a crisis. But they ignore the fact that dispersing the MX on commercial rail tracks creates huge missile security problems.

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Close coordination with civilian rail traffic would be required and information would be widely shared and difficult to control. **Derailments** or other accidents would be a continual risk, especially in times of crisis. Simply put, the MX cars could be a catastrophic accident waiting to happen on America's aging rail lines.

Any accidents could result in plutonium or uranium contamination in populated areas. A fuel explosion alone would be catastrophic - buildings would be flattened up to 1,000 feet away and the toxic chemicals released could be fatal well over a mile from the accident. Even if we could avoid a catastrophic accident, sabotage would remain a constant risk. MX cars would be relatively easy to distinguish from average railcars and thus subject to surveillance and sabotage along the 120,000 miles of track they will travel. We cannot protect 120,000 miles of track from sabotage.

In the realm of deterrence, what was true before the United States built the MX missile and before it considered giving the MX its own train is still true: Our bombers and submarines provide a deterrent that can survive any Soviet attack and launch a devastating counterstrike, making any Soviet decision to strike first an act of national suicide.

The MX does not add to the deterrent force that protects our safety. Rather, it is a use-or-lose, first-strike weapon. And ironically, putting the MX on train tracks won't threaten the Soviets - it will threaten us.

SOURCE: Alan Wheat represents Missouri's 5th Congressional District, Kansas City.

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September 24, 1993

BARGE HIT TRESTLE 12 MINUTES BEFORE FATAL ALABAMA CRASH

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Article Text:

MOBILE, ALA. - The investigation into Amtrak's deadliest crash focused Thursday on a towboat operator who - 12 minutes before the crash - radioed that he was having a problem with a runaway barge.

The barge struck a **railroad** trestle over the foggy backwater of Bayou Canot early Wednesday just before the train plunged off the bridge into the water and exploded, killing at least 44 of the 210 people on board.

"The fact is, he was lost," said Coast Guard Capt. Michael Perkins, speaking of the pilot of the towboat Mauvilla. "While he was trying to gather up his barges, the train came along and the accident occurred."

The pilot, Andrew Stabler, has been questioned by the FBI and his vessel has been impounded. On Thursday, the barges were moored a quarter-mile from the crash site, 10 miles north of Mobile.

Perkins said Stabler radioed in at 3:06 a.m. Wednesday that he had struck a bridge, but he mistakenly thought he had hit a span on the Mobile River. Instead, he was on Bayou Canot, one of several bayous, streams and creeks that feed into the Mobile at its delta. The train crossed the trestle 12 minutes later.

Results of mandatory drug and alcohol tests on Stabler and three crewman were unavailable, the Coast Guard said.

The barges - each 193 feet long and 35 feet wide - were lashed two aside and filled with coal, coke and wood chips. Some apparently broke loose on impact, and Stabler was trying to corral them in the heavy fog.

Stabler, who lives 60 miles north of Mobile in Martinville, Ala., refused to answer questions without consulting his lawyer.

"I'd like to tell my side. People get things and turn them around."

Warrior & Gulf Navigation Co., owner of the towboat, said in a statement that the towboat had been pushing barges north in the fog-shrouded Mobile River.

"The vessel found itself not in the river channel but in the Bayou Canot," said Andrew Harris, general manager for terminals for Warrior & Gulf. "Details are still unclear, but the vessel was trying to return to the river as the Amtrak train approached the bridge where the accident occurred."

When the train plunged into the bayou, Stabler maneuvered his boat to rescue 17 survivors from the murky water, his company said. "We saved lives," Stabler told The Birmingham News. "We got people off who were hanging on the cars. My men put their lives on the line."

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The 500-foot-long bridge, built in 1909 of wood and steel, is accessible only by rail or boat. It has a clearance of 7 feet between its bed and the water.

FBI agent Charles W. Archer said, "Barges are not allowed in that creek."

The single-lane span is one of the busiest in the system operated by CSX Transportation Inc., carrying 15 to 20 trains a day. The trestle was inspected as recently as Sunday, and a 132-car CSX freight train with three locomotives had crossed it about an hour before the Amtrak train crashed.

John Hammerschmidt, a spokesman for the National Transportation Safety Board, said the freight train had been inspected on arrival at its destination and found to have no damage that could have harmed the bridge or track.

In the crash, three Amtrak locomotives, a baggage car, a dormitory car for crew members and two passenger coaches plunged off the bridge into brackish water populated by alligators and water moccasins. Four other cars derailed on the bridge, including one that dangled over the edge.

At the crash site, a giant crane was used Thursday to keep the wreckage from slipping in the water, and a second was being positioned by barge as divers searched for bodies.

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